
Unit 6

General Staff— Operations Section

Check Your Knowledge



1. What are the functions of the four branches of the Operations Section?
2. Name three types of disaster assistance managed by the Operations Section.
3. What is a mission assignment?
4. List the four requirements for Public Assistance eligibility.
5. What is the difference between 404 and 406 Mitigation programs?
6. Give three examples of assistance programs offered through Individual Assistance.

Check Your Knowledge

Answers



1. Human Services Branch

- Provides for short- and long-term disaster housing.
- Coordinates non-medical mass care services.
- Initiates delivery of Individual Assistance programs authorized by the Stafford Act.
- Assures provision of victim-related recovery efforts such as counseling.

Infrastructure Support Branch

- Debris clearance and disposal operations.
- Initiates delivery of Public Assistance programs authorized by the Stafford Act.

Emergency Services Branch

- Detects and suppresses fires on Federal, State, Tribal, and local lands.
- Urban search and rescue.
- Hazardous materials response.

Mitigation Branch

- Supports efforts to eliminate or reduce degree of long-term risk to human life and property.

2. Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation.

3. A work order issued by FEMA to a Federal agency for the completion of a task to meet an urgent, immediate need of the State.

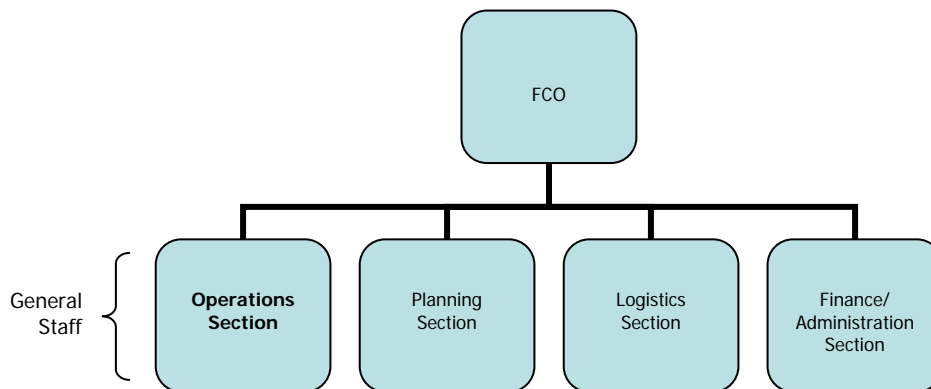
4. Cost, Work, Applicant, Facility.



5. 404 Mitigation funds projects that are part of a long-range comprehensive mitigation plan.
 - 406 Mitigation funds repairs of eligible, damaged facilities and infrastructure.
 6. Individuals and Households Program
 - Permanent Housing Construction Assistance
 - Replacement Assistance
 - Repair Assistance
 - SBA loans
 - Business Physical Loss Disaster Loans
 - Economic Injury Disaster Loans
 - Aging Services
 - Agricultural Assistance
 - Consumer Services
 - Disaster Unemployment Assistance
 - Disaster Legal Services
 - Cora Brown Fund
- Other Needs Assistance



General Staff— Operations Section



Overview

The General Staff component of the Incident Command System is divided into four main sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. This unit will look at the Operations Section, the programs it manages, and its basic structure.

The purpose of the Operations Section is to direct the delivery of Federal assistance along with several recovery program groups. Mission Assignment is used to complete specific tasks which support the incident objectives.

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the main responsibilities of each branch in the Operations Section.
- Name and differentiate the three major types of disaster assistance managed by the Operations Section.
- Define and explain the purpose of Mission Assignment.
- List the four building blocks of Public Assistance eligibility.
- Differentiate between the 404 and 406 Mitigation programs.
- List three disaster assistance programs available through the Human Services Branch.

The Four Branches of the Operations Section

The Operations Section consists of four branches:

- Human Services Branch
- Infrastructure Support Branch
- Emergency Services Branch
- Community Recovery and Hazard Mitigation Branch

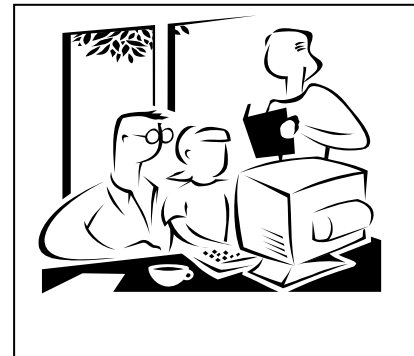
The branches represent groups of related ESFs and program functions. Working together, they provide a coordinated approach to the delivery of disaster assistance to victims and affected States.

Human Services Branch

When the President declares a major disaster, a wide range of assistance becomes available to individual disaster victims. Individual Assistance (IA) programs meet a variety of individual needs, depending on the disaster.

The Human Services mission is to:

- Ensure that applicants for disaster assistance have timely access to IA programs.
- Provide quality customer service.
- Develop partnerships with States, voluntary agencies, private sector, and other Federal agencies.



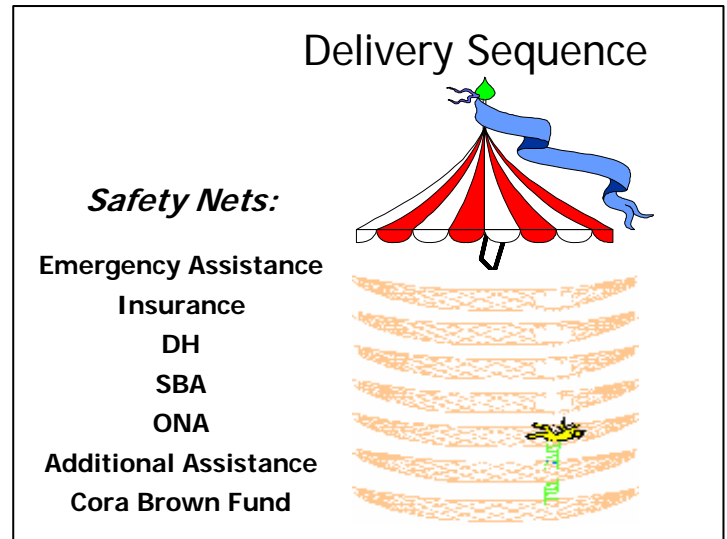
This branch also includes representatives from ESFs 6 and 11.

Delivery Sequence

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act PL 93-288 as amended specifies the order in which assistance should be provided.

The delivery sequence is:

- Emergency assistance provided by voluntary agencies
- Insurance
- Disaster Housing assistance
- SBA loans
- Other Needs Assistance (ONA)
- Additional assistance
- The Cora Brown Fund



Emergency Assistance

Emergency needs include shelter, food, clothing, and first aid. Local agencies such as the fire department, emergency medical services, American Red Cross, and other voluntary agencies provide emergency assistance during immediate response.

Insurance

Applicants pursue assistance through their private insurance carriers. If the insurance settlement is delayed, insurance is insufficient, or claims are denied, applicants may receive Disaster Housing assistance, but must guarantee repayment of FEMA funds if insurance covers the losses.

Individuals and Households Program—Disaster Housing

Disaster Housing is administered and funded by FEMA. Assistance may include the following:

- **Temporary Housing** (Rent and Lodging Expense)—Money to rent a different place to live or a temporary housing unit, when rental properties are not available.
- **Repair**—Money for homeowners to repair disaster damage that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to repair the home to a safe and sanitary living or functioning condition. FEMA may provide up to \$5,000; then the homeowner must apply for a Small Business Administration disaster loan for additional repair assistance. FEMA will not pay to return a home to its pre-disaster condition. Flood insurance may be required if the home is in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).
- **Replacement**—Money to replace a disaster-damaged home, done under rare conditions, with limited funds. If the home is located in a SFHA, the homeowner must comply with flood insurance purchase requirements and local flood codes and requirements.
- **Permanent Housing Construction**—Direct assistance or money for the construction of a home. This type of assistance occurs only in very unusual situations, in remote locations specified by FEMA where no other type of housing assistance is possible. Construction will aim toward average quality, size, and capacity, taking into consideration the needs of the occupant.



Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans

Low-interest disaster loans are available to homeowners, renters, business owners, and non-profit organizations. This program is administered and funded by the SBA under its own authority.

The SBA Administrator can make loans available, or a Presidential Declaration including IA in its parameters will provide the authority for SBA loans.

SBA uses income tables as an initial screen for eligibility. The tables are based on income and household composition and are updated annually.

SBA loans make substantial amounts available to help disaster victims recover from the disaster and return their property to pre-disaster condition. Applicants must be able to repay their loans. SBA loans can be personal or for business purposes. Loans are:

- Limited to verified loss and mitigation in some circumstances.
- Up to a maximum of \$200,000 for real property and \$40,000 personal property.
- Up to a maximum of \$1.5 million for businesses.

Individuals and Households Program—Other Needs Assistance (ONA)

Personal Property—Money to repair or replace personal property that is damaged or destroyed as a result of the disaster and is not covered by insurance. The goal is to help with the cost for the necessary expenses and serious needs. All applicants must apply for an SBA disaster loan for personal property before being considered for ONA. Funds may be used for clothing, household items, specialized tools, educational materials, and clean-up items.

Transportation—This money is intended to pay for the repair and/or replacement of an individual's primary means of transportation.

Medical and Dental Expenses—This money is intended for medical and/or dental treatment costs or the purchase of medical equipment required because of physical injuries received as a result of the disaster.

Funeral and Burial Costs—This money is intended for the payment of funeral services, burial or cremation, and other funeral expenses caused by the disaster.

Other Items—This money is to cover specific disaster-related costs such as fuel, moving and storage expenses, towing, utilities setup, or the cost of a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Group Flood Insurance Policy.

The maximum grant amount is adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Additional Individual Assistance Programs

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA): Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and job placement assistance are available for people who have become unemployed as a result of the disaster, but who are ineligible for regular unemployment benefits. There is a 30-day application period from the date the State issues a public notice of DUA availability. Benefits can extend from the incident date until 26 weeks after the declaration date. Individuals must register with the local unemployment office. Program benefits can include self-employed and agricultural workers.

FEMA funds DUA, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor through the State Employment Security Agency.

Crisis Counseling Assistance (CCA) is intended to relieve mental health problems caused or aggravated by the disaster or its aftermath.

Crisis Counseling is:

- Administered through the State Mental Health Agency in cooperation with the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS).
- Available to victims and disaster workers in major disasters.
- Provided as immediate services during the first 60 days following a declaration, and must be supplied within 14 days of the disaster declaration. The regular program provides up to 9 months of CC services and must be applied for separately by the Governor within 60 days of the declaration. Outreach services include public information, community networking, and education services.

Disaster Legal Services (DLS): FEMA, through an agreement with the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association, provides free legal help for disaster victims. Services are intended for low-income individuals and legal advice is limited to cases that will not produce a fee.

Assistance typically includes:

- Insurance claims
- Home repair contracts
- New wills and other lost legal documents
- Problems with landlords

- Powers of attorney
- Guardianships and similar legal problems

Legal services cannot be used to process claims against the Government or for income-producing lawsuits.



Cora Brown Fund

This fund was established in 1977 when Cora C. Brown of Kansas City, Missouri, left a portion of her estate to the United States. These funds were to be used as a special fund for the relief of human suffering caused by natural disasters.

The Cora Brown Fund provides funds for unmet disaster-related needs, administered by FEMA. Disaster victims need not apply. Verification is conducted by the Regional Director who prepares a recommendation to the Assistant Director for Readiness, Response and Recovery.

Other Agencies' Programs

- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS):** Counseling on deducting casualty losses and other tax advice.
- **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):** Financing and refinancing of mortgages with low or no down payment to eligible veterans, death benefits, pensions, and insurance settlements.
- **Farm Service Agency (FSA):** Loans to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural operations.
- **Food and Nutrition Service:** Food donations and emergency food stamps.

- **Donations Management:** Keeping unneeded, unsolicited goods, and volunteer service away from the disaster area. Encourages appropriate donations such as financial contributions and goods and services that are needed to meet the needs of disaster victims. Includes the activation of the State Donations Plan, the establishment of a Donations Coordination Center, a Donations Coordination Team, and a Donations Phone Bank.



Duplication of Benefits

An applicant cannot receive Disaster Housing assistance if assistance for the same purpose is provided from another source.

An agency which pays an applicant duplicate assistance is responsible for recovering the funds. Delivery sequence dictates assistance order.

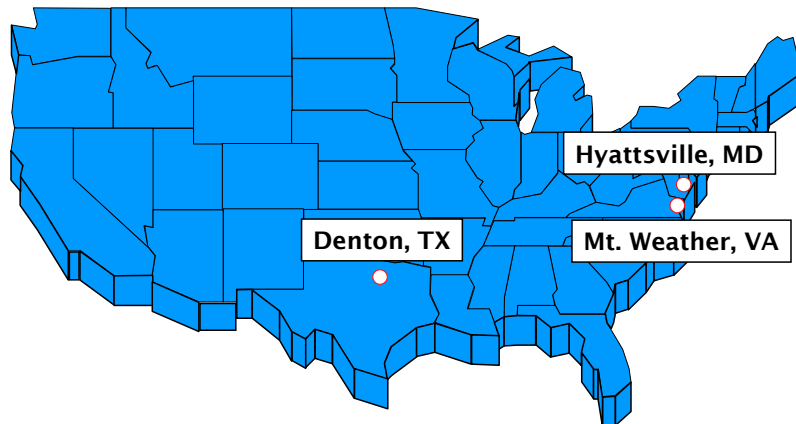
The delivery sequence can be disrupted as a result of unreasonable delays with insurance or SBA loans. Applications are automatically checked for duplicate phone numbers, Social Security numbers, and other identifiers.

Assistance Facilities

Assistance facilities can include DRCs and National Processing Service Centers (NPSCs).

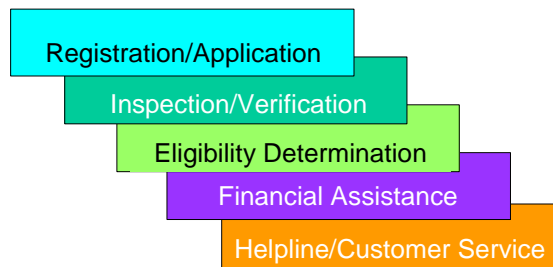
A **DRC** is a temporary facility where a person can meet face-to-face with representatives of Federal agencies, State, Tribal, and local governments, and voluntary agencies. If the decision is made to open DRCs, they are established close to the disaster area and jointly operated by the State and FEMA. At the DRC, a disaster victim can get assistance with applications, advice, and materials. The number of DRCs depends on the magnitude of the disaster and the size of the area included in the declaration.

National Processing Service Centers (NPSCs) process applications for assistance.



Assistance Process

The assistance process includes the following steps.



Registration/Application

FEMA activates the toll-free telephone numbers as needed:

1-800-621-FEMA (3362)
1-800-462-7585 (TTY)

Typically an estimated 80 percent of calls require processing. An application requires approximately 20 minutes to complete. Multi-lingual operators are available in a variety of languages.

Inspection/Verification

Registrations are downloaded from FEMA to the contractor responsible for inspections. The contractor assigns inspectors to visit damaged dwellings. The inspectors verify registration information, occupancy, and/or ownership. They also survey and record damage.

The inspection report serves as a “combined verification” for Disaster Housing and damage to real and personal property. Inspectors also gather and report additional information, such as special needs and accessibility problems. The inspectors electronically transmit inspection results from the field to FEMA for processing.



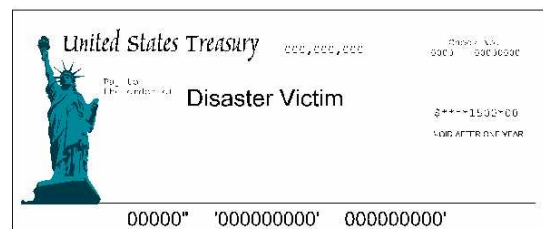
Eligibility Determination

An eligibility determination is based on returning damaged dwellings and essential living areas to habitable, safe, sanitary, and secure condition. Family rooms and finished basements are excluded from the repair program; however, removal of contaminated carpets, etc., can be authorized.

There is no minimum level of repair assistance, but a maximum is set and periodically adjusted. The amount of assistance an individual receives often is determined automatically.

Assistance

Payments are authorized through the Disaster Finance Center (DFC) and transmitted to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Checks to applicants are disbursed through the appropriate Treasury branch.



Helpline/Customer Service

The Helpline is a toll-free number that individuals can call when they need additional help or have questions.



The Helpline operator handles calls from applicants who need additional assistance or have questions about the assistance received. Helpline staff provide application status information, request re-inspection when appropriate, provide information about additional rental assistance, and make referrals to other programs or services.

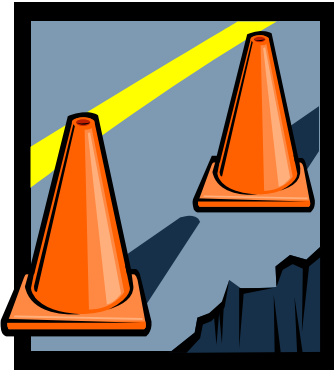
The Helpline numbers are:

<p>1-800-621-FEMA (3362) 1-800-462-7585 (TTY)</p>

The Human Services Branch offers a wide variety of assistance programs that meet a broad range of needs. The programs are designed to provide help starting with emergency needs and continuing through more far-reaching recovery activities.

The Infrastructure Support Branch

This branch provides technical assistance, coordinates direct Federal resources, and administers financial assistance for State, local, and Tribal governments, and certain non-profit organizations. Typically this involves administering Federal grants to help rebuild public facilities such as roads, bridges, buildings, utilities, and recreational facilities damaged by disasters.



The purpose of the Infrastructure Support Branch is to:

- Address immediate threats to life, public health and safety, and to protect improved public and private properties.
- Ensure the public is served in a timely and efficient manner.
- Provide assistance to repair, restore, or replace eligible permanent facilities.
- Encourage mitigation measures.

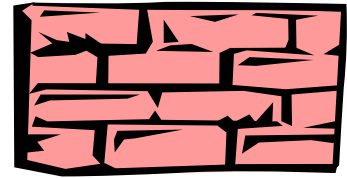
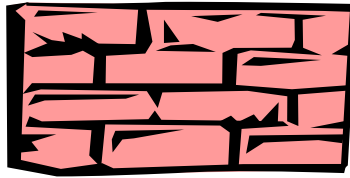
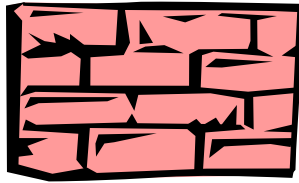
The Infrastructure Support Branch also includes representatives from ESFs 3 and 12.

Branch Functions

The primary functions of the Infrastructure Support Branch include:

- Debris clearance, removal, and disposal operations.
- Emergency protective measures operations.
- Identification and support of incident-damaged public works or infrastructure.
- Administration of Public Assistance (PA) authorized by the Stafford Act.

The Foundations of Public Assistance



The Stafford Act is the primary document governing the PA programs. It defines and describes the various elements of the program. Another important PA document is Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 206 or **44 CFR** as it is also called. FEMA regulations for PA are spelled out here, as is the guide to program implementation. FEMA also uses policies issued by Headquarters in the delivery of the PA program. These policies may be either subject-specific or disaster-specific.

Overview of the PA Process

Once a disaster occurs and is officially declared, the PA process begins. There are several specific PA phases or steps which take place. The sequence of events is shown below:

1. Disaster strikes.
2. PDA conducted and immediate needs funding provided.
3. Declaration issued.
4. Applicants' briefing conducted.
5. Request for assistance submitted.
6. Kickoff meeting held.
7. Small and large project formulation takes place.
8. Small projects validated and large projects begun.
9. Projects funded.
10. Project closeout completed.



The steps show just how the PA process unfolds. After an incident occurs, a PDA is conducted by local, State, and Federal teams. The Governor of the affected State may request assistance from the President. If the President declares a disaster, then the full PA process begins.

- **Applicant Briefing:** State emergency officials conduct a briefing to inform potential applicants of available assistance and the procedures for applying. The State is responsible for conducting one or more applicant briefings.
- **Request for Public Assistance:** Applicants complete a Request for Public Assistance form (RPA) to document their intention to apply for PA. Once the RPA is submitted to the State, the information is forwarded to FEMA.
- **Kickoff Meetings:** The applicant, the State, and FEMA meet to explain the PA process and procedures, discuss applicant damages, assess applicant needs, and explain eligibility. The participants then agree upon a plan of action. Kickoff meetings ensure that applicants have the information needed to identify and complete a PA project. The State receives specific details on documentation and reporting requirements.
- **Project Formulation:** PA staff works with applicants to complete documentation of proposed projects to ensure that projects meet PA eligibility criteria.
- **Project Worksheets:** PA staff work with applicants as needed to complete Project Worksheets that provide FEMA with a detailed scope of work and an accurate cost estimate for each project.
- **Closeout:** This takes place when projects are completed.

General Program Eligibility



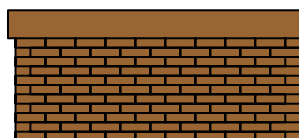
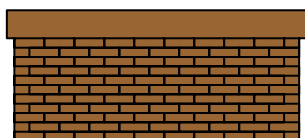
A hierarchy of statutes, regulations, and policies govern the eligibility criteria of the PA Program. The Stafford Act and Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 206 specify eligibility guidelines for receiving PA. Using these guidelines, FEMA has established funding criteria which form the **four components of eligibility**. They are:

Applicant

Facility

Work

Cost



These components act as building blocks that support each other. Each individual component, starting with the applicant and working up, must be eligible in order for the total project to be eligible.

Let's take a closer look at each of the four eligibility components starting with **eligible applicants**.

Applicant

There are four types of applicants which are considered eligible:

- State Government Agencies
- Local Governments
- Federally Recognized Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations
- Certain Private Non-Profit Organizations

Private non-profits (PNP) must meet the PNP requirements of the IRS or the State as well as provide services that would otherwise be performed by a government agency. Examples of such services would include education, medical, fire and emergency, utilities, custodial care, and essential government services. Essential government services are defined by law and can be facilities such as museums, zoos,

community centers, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, and rehabilitation facilities.

If an organization meets the requirements of one of these categories, it qualifies as an eligible applicant. It can apply for Public Assistance.

Facility

Next let's discuss what makes a **facility eligible**.



Generally speaking, an eligible facility is a building, industrial or public works, system, or equipment that is built or manufactured. It can also be an improved and maintained natural feature that is owned by an eligible non-profit applicant.

To be eligible for PA, a facility must:

- Be the legal responsibility of an eligible applicant.
- Be located in a designated disaster area.
- Not be under the specific authority of another Federal agency.
- Be in active use at the time of the incident.

Examples of eligible public facilities are roads, sewage treatment plants, airports, schools, bridges, dams, and irrigation channels. Examples of private non-profit, eligible facilities are educational facilities, utilities, fire stations, and medical facilities. If a facility is being used for purposes other than what it was originally designed for, eligibility is limited to restoring it to its immediate pre-disaster use.

Work

For work to be eligible, the following three general criteria must be met:

- Work must be the result of a declared incident.
- Work must be in the designated disaster area.
- Work must be the legal responsibility of the applicant.

There are **two classifications of work** under the PA Program:

- **Emergency work** refers to any activity necessary to protect public health and safety. It includes debris removal and emergency protective measures.
- **Permanent work** refers to any activity that must be performed for the restoration of a facility to its pre-disaster condition. It includes, but is not limited to, work on roads, bridges, buildings, utilities, and recreational facilities.

There are different work completion deadlines and cost eligibility guidelines associated with these two classifications of work.

Costs

Generally, costs that can be directly tied to approved work are eligible. Costs which can be reimbursed include appropriate labor, materials, equipment, contracts, and administrative allowance. These costs must be:

- Reasonable and necessary to accomplish the work.
- Compliant with Federal, State, Tribal, and local requirements for procurement.
- Reduced by all applicable credits such as insurance proceeds and salvage values.

A cost is reasonable if it does not exceed that which a prudent person would spend under the same circumstances. FEMA determines reasonable rates through the use of historical documentation for similar work. In addition, FEMA uses average costs for similar work in the area, published unit costs from national cost-estimating databases, and FEMA cost codes.

Public Assistance Roles and Responsibilities



In the overall recovery effort, FEMA and the State work as a team to see that all needed services and assistance are delivered to those who are eligible. Several individuals are involved in carrying out the PA process. They include the Applicants, State personnel, and FEMA staff. This section will look at the responsibilities of several key FEMA roles.

Public Assistance Officer (PAO)

The PAO heads the PA Group in the Infrastructure Support Branch, and often serves as the Infrastructure Branch Chief.

The PAO:

- Manages all PA functions at the JFO for the disaster.
- Coordinates with the FCO, State, and other programs.
- Funds projects up to specified dollar amounts.
- Ensures compliance with laws and regulations.



Additionally, the PAO advises the FCO on all PA matters, manages the operation of the PA staff, and handles coordination between the PA program and other parts of the Federal recovery effort. The PAO also works closely with State counterparts to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of applicants.

After the JFO closes, the PAO at the host Region manages the PA program for the disaster.

Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC)

The PAC manages all aspects of the applicant's request for assistance from start to finish. It's the PAC who is the main point of contact between the applicant and FEMA. He or she monitors the applicant's needs, oversees progress, and coordinates the work of the Project Officers and Specialists. The PAC coordinates with the State as needed to resolve problems. By being involved from the declaration to the obligation of funds, the PAC ensures continuity of service throughout the delivery of the PA program.

The duties of the PAC include:

- Providing customer service and technical assistance to applicants.
- Maintaining the applicant case management files.
- Conducting the kickoff meeting.
- Approving projects up to a specified dollar amount.
- Assisting States in conducting applicant briefings if needed.

Project Officer (PO)

The responsibilities of the PO include:

- Providing technical assistance and guidance.
- Formulating large projects.
- Coordinating with staff and applicants.



The PO is responsible for developing the scope of work (in partnership with State and local representatives) and for preparing the cost estimate for applicants' large projects. The PO is also responsible for ensuring that the necessary reviews for special considerations (e.g., historic, environmental, insurance, 406 hazard mitigation, etc.) are performed, for preparing all required reports, and for coordinating with appropriate internal and external staff. The PO may be required to assist applicants with small project formulation, and may conduct small project validations. The PO also delegates and coordinates the work of specialists assigned to a project.

Resource Coordinator

The duties of the Resource Coordinator include:

- Assisting in determining staff requirements.
- Developing a resource plan.
- Assigning and tracking resource staff.



The Resource Coordinator is responsible for managing the resource pool, determining Federal staffing needs, coordinating requests for specialists, and maintaining schedules and assignments. The Resource Coordinator works closely with the PAO, the PAC, and State counterparts to ensure that staffing needs are met.

Specialists

The functions of a specialist include:

- Serving as a resource to the PAO, PAC, PO, and applicants.
- Providing expertise on small and large projects.
- Validating small projects.

Specialists are responsible for providing assistance in technical and special consideration areas such as debris removal, insurance, and hazard mitigation. They also conduct PDAs and are available to do cost estimating. Specialists are assigned to the resource pool.

Special Considerations

The term *Special Considerations* was coined by FEMA to describe issues other than program eligibility that can affect the scope of the work and the funding for a project. They are areas requiring special attention and include:

- Insurance
- Hazard Mitigation
- Floodplain Management
- Historic Preservation
- Environmental Factors
- Compliance with other Federal laws and regulations



Special Considerations issues receive attention early in the recovery phase. Review of the issues continues throughout the entire PA process. The review starts with the PDA. A scoping process to identify potential issues takes place at the same time as the applicant's briefing. At the kickoff meeting, the PAC and the applicant discuss Special Considerations issues that apply to the applicant's projects.

Specialists are used to work with the applicant on the identified issues. During project formulation, the Project Officer works with the PAC on large projects to make sure Special Considerations are resolved. For small projects, Special Considerations are identified and separated out during validation. Documentation of Special Considerations resolution occurs throughout validation and project approval.

Underlying all Special Considerations work are key questions presented in a worksheet the applicant must complete. The worksheet is used to ensure that projects are done correctly and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

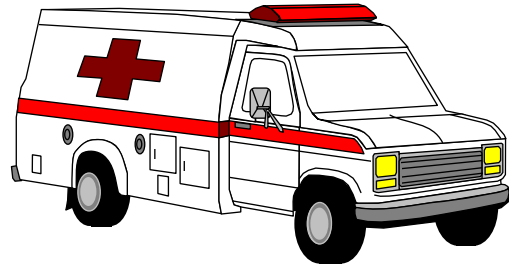
There are significant consequences for non-compliance with Special Considerations requirements. They include loss of funding, delays in funding, legal action, and negative publicity.

The **Infrastructure Support** is responsible for a variety of activities following an incident. These include providing funding for immediate response efforts; assisting with debris removal and emergency protective measures; supplementing State, Tribal, and local recovery efforts; repairing, restoring, reconstructing, or replacing public infrastructure; and promoting mitigation measures.

Emergency Services Branch

In addition to Human Services and Infrastructure Support, the Operations Section includes Emergency Services. The Emergency Services Branch responds to immediate threats to life and property by providing services in:

- Firefighting
- Hazardous materials response
- Search and rescue
- Emergency medical care
- Control of contagious diseases
- Assistance with public safety and security



Firefighting

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), USFS, leads firefighting efforts. The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) coordinates resources for firefighting on Federal lands. The Emergency Services Branch can support State and local firefighting organizations by:

- Providing logistical support.
- Identifying available firefighting resources.
- Managing Federal wildfire suppression activities.



Hazardous Materials Response

Hazardous materials response provides support to actual or potential discharge and/or release of hazardous materials following an incident. Activities include identifying, evaluating, and monitoring actual and potential releases of oil or hazardous materials.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) coordinates the requests for hazardous materials response assistance. It is supported by the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and other agencies.



Urban Search and Rescue (ESF 9)

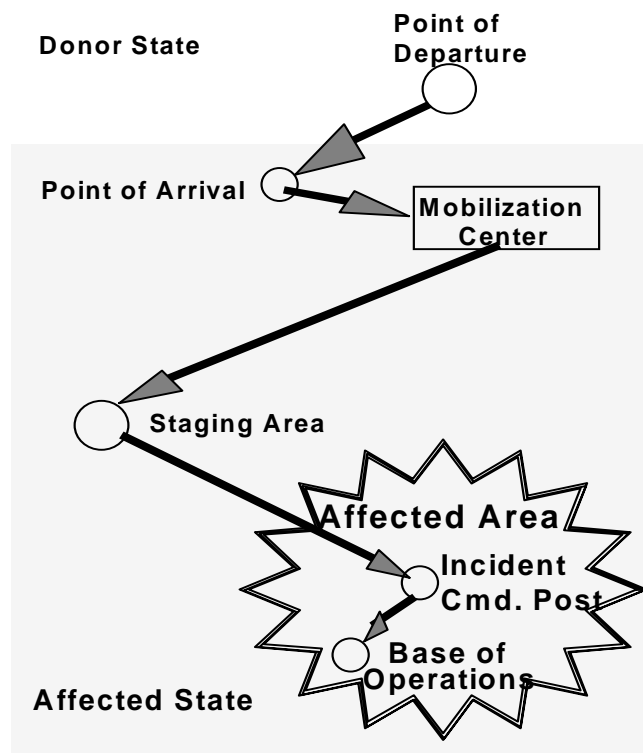
Urban Search and Rescue's (US&R's) purpose is to supplement State and local resources in locating, medically stabilizing, and extricating individuals trapped as a result of structural collapse due to:

- Earthquake
- Hurricanes
- Explosions
- Tornadoes
- Other possible events causing structural collapses

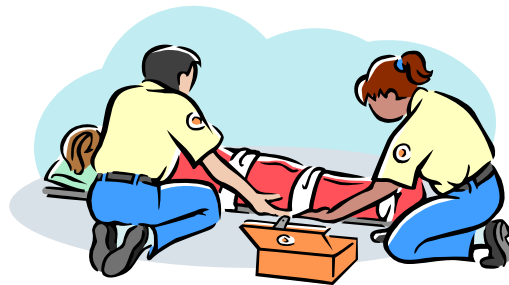
The National US&R Response System includes Task Forces, Incident Support Teams, and technical specialists.

The US&R Response System follows a carefully developed sequence of operations. At the initial Staging Area, the team receives the site assignment and travels to the site. At the site, the team contacts the local Incident Commander and receives a detailed briefing of the situation. A Base of Operations is established. The team then receives the tactical assignment and begins on-site operations under the local Incident Commander.

The diagram below illustrates this process.



Public Health and Medical Services (ESF 8)



Health and Medical Care provides assistance to supplement State and local resources for public health and medical care needs during a disaster.

FEMA activates the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) as needed to provide health and medical care assistance.

DMATs are deployed to the appropriate areas. A DMAT is a unit of 35 physicians, nurses, and technicians, with equipment and supply caches. The team provides vital medical care. Once in the field, a DMAT is supported by a Management Support Team (MST), which manages the required health and medical resources.

A DMORT provides a temporary morgue facility, victim identification, processing, preparation, and disposal of remains.

A Metro Medical Strike Team (MMST) provides assistance in the medical treatment/management of chemical, biological, or nuclear incidents resulting from deliberate or accidental acts.

Community Recovery and Hazard Mitigation Branch

The fourth branch of the Operations Sections is the **Community Recovery and Hazard Mitigation Branch**. Hazard Mitigation is defined as any action of a long-term, permanent nature that reduces the actual or potential risk of loss of life or property from a hazardous event.

Sample mitigation measures include:

- Acquisition of structures, also referred to as buyouts
- Relocation of structures out of hazardous locations
- Strengthening/retrofitting structures to withstand forces
- Making utilities, structural components, and contents resistant to damage
- Diverting the hazard
- Elevating structures
- Managing vegetation to reduce wildfires
- Implementation of local mitigation standards

Opportunities exist for both pre- and post-incident mitigation activities.



Pre-Disaster Mitigation Programs/Activities

Pre-disaster mitigation focuses on State mitigation planning.

Before a disaster occurs, the State decides on the types of mitigation projects it wants to pursue and sets priorities on potential mitigation projects. FEMA requires States to create and maintain an Administrative Plan and a State Mitigation Plan to qualify for mitigation assistance.

The following table gives examples of **pre-incident** mitigation programs.

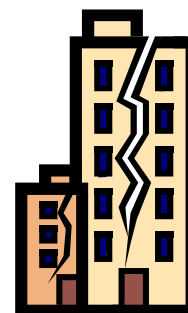
Program	Description
National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	The NFIP is the premier, fundamental mitigation program in the United States. It provides the availability of flood insurance in exchange for the adoption of a minimum local floodplain management ordinance that regulates new and substantially improved development in identified flood hazard areas.
Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS)	FIRMS are the mechanism by which flood hazard areas are identified. When a community participates in FIRMS, FEMA provides the community with the FIRMS.
NFIP Increased Cost of Compliance	This program provides added coverage to standard flood insurance policies to supplement the cost of elevating structures.
Community Rating System (CRS)	The CRS is a program that rewards communities for going beyond the minimum requirements of the NFIP. If certain criteria are met, the community receives a 5-percent reduction to its insurance premium.
Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP)	The Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, which began in 1997, provides pre-disaster grants for both planning and implementation. Grant funds are made available from NFIP insurance premiums and are only available to communities participating in the NFIP. Grants will be made available in each region, distributed based on the number of NFIP policies in force, and awarded on the number of repetitive claims paid.
Hurricane Program (HP)	FEMA and State efforts combine with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop evacuation plans for coastal communities vulnerable to hurricanes and severe coastal storms. Grants are available to State and local governments for property protection, hazard analysis and evacuation planning, post-storm analyses, training, exercises, public awareness, and education efforts.

Program	Description
National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP)	The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program is a partnership between four Federal entities: FEMA, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST). The program's purpose is to reduce the risks to life and property from earthquakes.

Post-Disaster Mitigation Actions

After a disaster is declared, the Community Recovery and Mitigation Branch assists in conducting damage assessments. A major consideration is the repair or replacement of damaged structures so that they do not suffer the same damages again. The damage assessment focuses on:

- Identifying where mitigation measures can be implemented.
- Conducting site visits and researching current community plans and codes, past disaster damages, and recurrence probabilities.



Soon after the disaster, an interagency Hazard Mitigation Team, consisting of Federal, State, Tribal, and local officials, compiles a report which incorporates existing statewide hazard mitigation plans with damage assessment information. The team determines what mitigation measures can be achieved following a disaster and makes recommendations. The recommendations included in the report serve as a blueprint for disaster funding of mitigation projects.

409 Program

States develop and implement a comprehensive all-hazards mitigation plan as a condition of Federal assistance. The plan must evaluate the hazards in the areas where Federal disaster assistance has been or may be provided, and it must set forth a plan of action to mitigate those hazards. Mitigation staff duties may include:

- Providing planning assistance to States.
- Coordinating the provision of technical assistance available through other Federal agencies.
- Reviewing and evaluating the plans.

404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

FEMA's 404 Program is a post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program which funds the implementation of mitigation measures that are developed in conformance with the State priorities identified in the "409" plan. The HMGP goal is to develop a long-term comprehensive mitigation program. The program is available upon State request and FEMA approval of the State plan. FEMA staff complete required analyses and coordination. The HMGP, which funds mitigation projects after a disaster declaration, is the major source for FEMA's mitigation funding.

The amount of funding is based on Federal expenditures during the disaster response and recovery. FEMA may contribute up to 80 percent of the costs.

HMGP objectives are:

- To identify and implement cost-effective mitigation measures that will reduce future losses.
- To coordinate mitigation needs with existing State and Federal efforts.
- To capitalize upon previous mitigation planning efforts to maximize the financial opportunities available under the HMGP.

The HMGP provides funding for mitigation measures that substantially reduce the risk of future damages.

HMGP Project Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants for HMGP grants include State agencies, local units of government, and certain private non-profit organizations. HMGP projects are not restricted to the disaster area. They may be implemented anywhere within a State that receives a declaration.

HMGP projects must:

- Conform to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Provide a beneficial impact upon the disaster area.
- Meet requirements set by environmental regulations.
- Solve a problem independently or be a functional part of a solution.
- Be cost-effective.

406 Mitigation Program

FEMA's 406 Program is the Public Assistance program that funds the repair of damaged facilities and infrastructure. Under this program, all repairs must conform to applicable codes and standards, and damaged facilities can be improved for mitigation purposes if proposed measures are technically feasible, cost effective, and environmentally sound. FEMA may prescribe codes and standards where they are lacking. Each repair must be generated by a Project Worksheet (PW). Mitigation staff duties include:

- Reviewing PWs for mitigation opportunities.
- Making recommendations based on PW review.
- Ensuring that the solution is physically part of the damaged facility.

The program seeks to ensure that mitigation opportunities are incorporated into infrastructure projects to the greatest extent possible.

Applicant Briefings

Local governments, private non-profit organizations, individuals, and businesses are eligible for different types of mitigation assistance. Applicant briefings are conducted to inform officials and individuals of the types of assistance that are available. Mitigation staff is responsible for:

- Informing people of the opportunities to implement mitigation measures.
- Providing guidance for the process that must be followed.
- Preparing materials for distribution.
- Coordinating public information releases.



Additional Post-Disaster Responsibilities

Additional post-disaster mitigation staff duties might include:

- Supporting community education programs.
- Staffing multiple DRCs.
- Providing a general discussion option available to applicants at the DRCs.

- Referring applicants to specific programs and reference materials.
- Monitoring compliance with local NFIP floodplain management ordinances or Federal Executive Orders and other regulations that pertain to the disbursement of Federal resources.
- Assisting in the coordination of mitigation efforts with FEMA's Human Services and/or Infrastructure programs.
- Gathering data for environmental assessments.
- Analyzing benefit-cost ratios for proposed projects.
- Researching issues related to Historic Preservation.



Regulations

Various laws and executive orders impose reviews and conditions on Federally funded projects. Major regulations which have an impact on mitigation projects include:

- Coastal Barriers Resources Act (COBRA)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Clean Air and Water Acts
- Executive Order 12898—Environmental Justice
- Executive Order 11988—Floodplain Management
- Executive Order 11990—Protection of Wetlands



State and FEMA mitigation staffs coordinate with a variety of State and Federal agencies as part of an environmental review. Most mitigation projects receive Categorical Exclusions, a finding of little or no adverse environmental or social impact.

Failure to complete the environmental review process usually means that funding for a project cannot be approved. Rare exceptions are actions initiated in an emergency situation when life, health, property, or severe economic losses are threatened.

Mitigation is the cornerstone and foundation for FEMA and for our partners. We encourage individuals, communities, States, Tribal nations, and others to take preventive measures to minimize damage. Action before an incident rather than after is the goal of the Mitigation Branch.



Getting the Job Done – Mission Assignment

The Operations Section relies on its staff in the Emergency Services, Infrastructure, Human Services, and Community Recovery and Hazard Mitigation Branches to carry out key responsibilities. It also taps into other Federal agencies for support in meeting critical needs dictated by an incident. The process is called Mission Assignment (MA).

An MA is a work order issued by FEMA to a Federal agency that directs completion of a specific task. It is intended to meet urgent, immediate, and short-term needs of the State. An MA is given in anticipation of, or in response to, a Presidential Declaration of a major disaster or emergency.

FEMA uses MAs to assign and monitor work done by the 15 ESF agencies identified in the NRP or to any Other Federal Agency (OFA) with the required expertise. MAs are issued to activate specific agencies to send representatives to emergency teams, and to task the activated agencies to supply goods or services. As agencies complete assigned work, they bill FEMA and are reimbursed for their expenses.

Types of MA Assistance

There are three types of MAs. The type of MA assistance determines financial responsibility and the respective roles of the Federal government and the State. The Federal government requests and pays the total cost for some MAs, but the State may be responsible for requesting, approving, and paying a cost share for others.

The three types of MA assistance are:

- Federal Operations Support
- Technical Assistance
- Direct Federal Assistance

Debris-related MAs provide examples of the MA types. Debris is a typical disaster response issue that involves MAs. USACE is responsible for debris removal as the primary agency for ESF 3—Public Works and Engineering. USACE can receive debris-related MAs for each of the three types of MAs.



Type 1—Federal Operations Support (FOS)

FOS is support to Federal responders, and is 100-percent federally funded. It is available prior to and after a Presidential Declaration.

As an example, FEMA may issue an MA for Federal Operations Support to USACE to activate and pre-position a Debris Planning and Response Team.

Type 2—Technical Assistance (TA)

TA is advice and expertise provided to State and local jurisdictions. It is requested by the State, 100-percent federally funded, and available before and after a Presidential Declaration.

As an example, FEMA could issue an MA for Technical Assistance to USACE to advise State government concerning contracts and planning specifications for clearing and removing debris.

Type 3—Direct Federal Assistance (DFA)






DFA is support to State and local governments, and is used for functions normally performed as State/local responsibilities. It is requested by the State, and is subject to cost-share which the President may waive. It is not available until after a Presidential Declaration. Because DFA imposes obligations on the State, the State must approve all MAs for DFA.


For example, if the State asks for assistance to remove debris, FEMA could issue an MA for Direct Federal Assistance to USACE to assist the State in performing the work of removing debris. The cost for the work done by USACE would be subject to a cost-share by the State.



MA Roles and Responsibilities

MAs are documented via a Request for Federal Assistance (RFA) form that is entered and approved in the National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS). The following officials and FEMA staff members play MA roles. See the table for the specific position and major responsibility.

Position	Major Responsibility
Operations Section Chief 	Coordinates the Federal response, including management of the MA process. Receives any requests from the State concerning assistance, Action Request Form (ARF), and determines whether MAs should be issued. Oversees the tasking and execution of the work.
Project Officer 	Monitors and approves work done under an MA. FEMA staff member designated by the Operations Chief, usually someone involved in managing the ESF. For any projects assigned to USACE, the Infrastructure Branch Director on the emergency team that issues the MA most likely serves as Project Officer, because ESF 3—Public Works and Engineering, is in the Infrastructure Branch.
Action Officer 	Scopes the task to determine timelines and costs. Normally a representative of an ESF or a Federal agency.
Mission Assignment Coordinator (MAC) 	Ensures that all necessary information is documented on the ARF which is entered into the Enterprise Coordination Approval Processing System (ECAPS) for routing and review. Works in close coordination with the Operations Section Chief, the Project Officer, and the Action Officer in reviewing and amending MAs as needed.
Comptroller 	Ensures that funds are available and obligates funds for MAs after all required approvals are obtained.

Position	Major Responsibility
Approving Officials 	<p>Approve MAs. The Regional Director and the FCO have authority to approve MAs as the Federal Approving Official (FAO). Signatory authority may be delegated to the Operations Section Chief. FEMA officials use ECAPS to approve ARFs. The State Approving Official (SAO) must approve all MAs for DFA, since required State assurances must be given, even if the State cost-share is waived.</p>

MA Issuance

To issue an MA:

- The Operations Section Chief determines that the request is best met by an MA. The ARF is forwarded to an ESF/OFA and a Project Officer is assigned to prepare a statement of work, estimated timeline, and cost estimate.
- The MAC ensures all necessary information is documented on the ARF. The information from the ARF is entered in ECAPS and routed for review and approval.
- The Project Officer reviews and signs the ARF in ECAPS.
- If the MA is for DFA, the SAO approves and signs the ARF in ECAPS.
- The FAO (usually the Operations Section Chief or FCO) approves and signs the ARF in ECAPS.
- The Comptroller verifies funds availability and upon their “acceptance” in NEMIS, funds are obligated in the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS).

Some common disaster MAs are pre-scripted, so they can be issued quickly. Statements of work and standard costs are determined by prior agreement between FEMA and the performing agency. Funding amounts may be adjusted up or down, and tasks may be added later as amendments.

Executing an MA

After the MA is issued, the performing agency can do the tasked work. The agency begins the task and reports progress to FEMA. It provides funding for the work and tracks all expenditures. The MA serves as an accounts receivable against which costs are incurred.

ESF lead agencies that need assistance may subtask support agencies, which report to the lead agencies. They may also contract with vendors.



MA Monitoring and Tracking

Tracking and monitoring roles and responsibilities include:

- Project Officer: Monitors execution
- MAC: Refines MA documentation as necessary
- Comptroller: Tracks MA financial status
- Performing agency: Submits progress and financial reports



Reimbursement and Closeout

The final steps in the process are:

- Lead agencies bill FEMA.
- Lead agencies review and forward support agency bills to FEMA.
- The DFC reviews the bills and pays the agencies.
- The FEMA program staff and the FAO review the work and approve payment.
- The remaining funds are de-obligated, and the MA file is closed.

Summary

The **Operations Section**, comprised of the Human Services, Emergency Services, Infrastructure Support, and Community Recovery and Hazard Mitigation Branches, implements and manages a wide variety of disaster assistance programs. These programs address both immediate and long range needs. The delivery of services is facilitated by the use of MAs which bring additional agencies into the recovery process.